



Islamic Online University

Explanation of the Six Pillars of Faith

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Notes based on Sharh Usool Al-Emaan by Shaykh
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Module 9

الإيمان بالقدر

Faith in Qadar

Al-Qadar is Allah's predestination of beings according to His Foreknowledge and as necessitated by His Wisdom.

The Belief in Al-Qadar Comprises Four Matters:

First: The Belief that Allah (ﷻ) knew everything on the whole and in detail which took place in the past and is taking or will take place in the future and forever, whether it is related to His Actions or the actions of His Ibaad (creatures).

Second: The Belief that Allah (ﷻ) wrote (everything pertaining to His Knowledge) in Al-Lauhul Mahfoudh.¹ Regarding these two aspects (knowledge and writing), Allah (ﷻ) says:

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

“Know you not that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth? Verily, it is (all) in the Book (Al-Lauhul Mahfoudh)! Verily that is easy for Allah.”²

In Saheeh Muslim from the way of Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin Al-‘Aas (رضي الله عنه) who said, I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

كتب الله مقادير الخلق قبل أن يخلق السموات والأرض بخمسين ألف سنة

“Allah had written the ordained measures (and due proportions) of the creation, fifty-thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth.”³

Third: The Belief that all created things do not come to exist except by the Will of Allah (ﷻ) making no difference whether it pertains to His Action or to that of the created beings. Allah (ﷻ) spoke about what pertains to His Action:

¹ Al-Lauhul Mahfoudh: The Preserved Tablet.

² Soorah Al-Hajj 22:70

³ Saheeh Muslim, Volume 4, Hadeeth Number. 6416.

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ^٤

“Verily, your Rabb creates whatever He wills and chooses.”⁴

وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ

“And Allah does what He Wills.”⁵

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ^٦

“He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases.”⁶

Pertaining to the action of the created, He (ﷺ) said:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَلَّطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقَتَلُوكُمْ^٧

“Had Allah willed, He would have given them power over you, and they would have fought you.”⁷

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرَهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ

“Had Allah willed, they would have not done so. So leave them alone with their fabrications.”⁸

Fourth: The Belief that all beings are created by Allah including Thawaatiha (their selves), their qualities and their motion. Allah (ﷻ) said:

اللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

⁴ Soorah Al-Qasas 28:68

⁵ Soorah Ibrahim 14:27

⁶ Soorah Aal-'Imran 3:6

⁷ Soorah An-Nisa' 4:90

⁸ Soorah Al-An'am 6:137

“Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Wakeel (Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian, etc.) over all things.”⁹

وَحَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا ﴿٢﴾

“And He created everything, and has measured it exactly to its due measurements.”¹⁰

He (ﷺ) said about His Prophet Ibraaheem (عليه السلام) that he told his people:

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

“While Allah has created you and what you make.”¹¹

The above description of the matters of belief in Al-Qadar does not negate that the ‘abd has a mashee’ah (will) and an ability (Qurdah) regarding his voluntarily deeds, because both Ash-Shar’a and Reality are proofs that affirm these (qualities) to him.

As for Ash-Shar’a, Allah (ﷻ) said about the mashee’ah (will) (of the ‘abd):

فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَآبًا ﴿٣٦﴾

“So whoever wills, let him seek a place with (or a way to) His Rabb (by obeying Him in this worldly life)!”¹²

فَاتُّوا حَرَّتْكُمْ أَنِّي شِعْتُمْ ط

“So go to your Harth¹³ when and or how you will.”¹⁴

⁹ Soorah Az-Zumar 39:62

¹⁰ Soorah Al-Furqan 25:2

¹¹ Ibraaheem (عليه السلام) was referring to the idols that his people used to worship:

قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

“He (Ibraaheem) said (to his people): ‘Worship you that which you (yourselves) carve? While Allah has created you and what you make!’” [Soorah As-Saaffaat 37:95-96] [Translator]

¹² Soorah An-Naba' 78:39

Allah (ﷻ) said regarding Al-Qudrah (man's ability):

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا

“So keep your duty to Allah and fear Him as much as you can; listen and obey.”¹⁵

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ

“Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned.”¹⁶

As to the Reality aspect, every person knows that he has a mashee'ah and a Qurdah by which he acts or relinquishes, and that he distinguishes between what he wilfully carries out, like walking, and what occurs unintentionally, like tremors. However, the 'abd's will (mashee'ah) and Qurdah exist only by Allah's Will and Ability. He (ﷻ) said:

لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ ۖ وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“To whomsoever among you who wills to walk straight, and you will not, unless (it be) that Allah wills - the Rabb of the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinns, and all that exists).”¹⁷

And since the entire universe belongs to Allah (ﷻ), then nothing will come to exist in His Kingdom without His will.

Also the belief in Al-Qadar as described above, does not grant the 'abd an argument neither for what he had abandoned from the obligatory acts nor for the acts of disobedience which he had committed. Accordingly, his justification, by making Al-Qadar as a pretext, is invalid by the following accounts:

¹³ Allah (ﷻ) described the wives as Harth: Tilth for their husbands. He (ﷻ) said:

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ فَاتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ

“Your wives are as a tilth for you, so go to your tilth, when or how you will.”

“Go to your tilth” means to have legal sexual relations with your wife.[Translator]

¹⁴ Soorah Al-Baqarah 2:223

¹⁵ Soorah At-Taghabun 64:16

¹⁶ Soorah Al-Baqarah 2:286

¹⁷ Soorah At-Takwir 81:28-29

First: In Allah's saying:

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا ءَابَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ^ج
كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا^ق قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ
فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا^ط إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

“Those who took partners (in worship) with Allah will say: ‘If Allah had willed, we would not have taken partners (in worship) with Him, and we would not have forbidden anything (against His Will).’ Likewise belied those who were before them, (they argued falsely with Allah’s Messengers), till they tasted of Our Wrath. Say: ‘Have you any knowledge (proof) that you can produce before us? Verily, you follow nothing but guesses and you do nothing but lie.’ ”¹⁸

Had there been an excuse for them in Al-Qadar, Allah (ﷻ) would not have inflicted punishment upon them.

Second: Allah's saying:

رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ^ج وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا
حَكِيمًا ﴿١٦٥﴾

“Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after the Messengers. And Allah is Ever All-Powerful, All-Wise.”¹⁹

Had Al-Qadar been a valid excuse for those opposing (the Messengers), it would never be eliminated by the mere sending of the Messengers, because the opposition will occur, by Allah's will, even after sending them.

Third: The hadeeth narrated by Alee bin Abee Taalib (رضي الله عنه) and reported by Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

¹⁸ Soorah Al-An'am 6:148

¹⁹ Soorah An-Nisa' 4:165

ما منكم من أحد إلا قد كتب مقعده من النار أو من الجنة فقال رجل من القوم : ألا نَتَّكِلُ يا رسول الله ؟ قال : لا ، اعملوا فكل ميسرٌ ، ثم قرأ:

“There is none of you but has his place assigned either in Hell or in Al-Jannah.” A man from amongst the people said: “Shall we not depend upon that (and give up doing any deeds)?” He said: “No, carry on doing (good deeds) for everybody will find it easy to do such deeds as will lead him to his destined place for which he has been created.” [And then the Prophet (ﷺ) recited the Aayah]:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى ۖ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى ۖ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى ۖ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَلَّ ۖ
وَأَسْتَغْنَى ۖ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى ۖ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى ۖ

“As for him who gives (in charity) and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him, and believes in Al-Husna²⁰ , We will make smooth for him the path of ease (goodness); But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient, and gives the lie to Husna, We will make smooth for him the path of evil).^{21, 22}

In the narration of Muslim:

فكل ميسرٌ لما خلق له

“...for everyone is facilitated in that for which he has been created...”

The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered to carry on doing good deeds and forbade the dependence upon Al-Qadar.

Fourth: Allah (ﷻ) commanded the ‘abd (to do the lawful) and forbade upon him (the unlawful) and did not hold him responsible except towards what he is unable to do. Allah (ﷻ) said:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ

“Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him as much as you can.”²³

²⁰ Al-Husna means either the declaration of: laa ilaaha illa lah: none has the right to be worshipped except Allah (ﷻ), or a reward from Allah (ﷻ) i.e. Allah (ﷻ) will compensate him for what he will spend in Allah’s Way or bless him with Al-Jannah. [Translator]

²¹ Soorah Al-Lail 92:5-10

²² See Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree, Volume 9, Hadeeth Number. 642.

²³ Soorah At-Taghabun 64:16

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

“Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope.”²⁴

If man is compelled to act, then he would be burdened with inescapable things. This is certainly false. That is why if he commits something wrong due to forgetfulness, ignorance, or under compulsion, then there is no sin on him because he is excused.

Fifth: The Al-Qadar of Allah (ﷻ) is a preserved secret kept unknown until the occurrence of what is preordained. The ‘abd’s intention of what he does precedes his action and thus it is not based upon foreknowledge on his part of the Qadar of Allah (ﷻ). At that time, his excuse about Al-Qadar is negated, because one can have no established proof in what he knows not.

Sixth: We see that man is keen to obtain what suits him from worldly matters. He does not abandon it for that which suits him not and then blame his relinquishment on Al-Qadar. Why is it then that he turns away from what benefits him from the matters of his Deen to that which causes him harm and then resort to Al-Qadar for justification? Isn’t it so that dealing with both matters should be one?!²⁵

The following is an example that clarifies this issue. If there are two roads in front of a person: one leading to a town filled with mischief, disorder, killing, looting, fear, hunger, and all forms of sexual and moral abuse; the second takes him to a town enjoying order, security and quiet, abundant sustenance and good living, and in which lives, honour, and property are respected; which road he will take?

Certainly he will take the road that takes him to the town of order and security. No sensible person would ever take the road that lead to the town of chaos and fear and then take Al-Qadar as a pretext. Why is it then when it comes to the matter of the Hereafter he takes the way to Fire (Hell) instead of the way to Al-Jannah and then use Al-Qadar as an argument?

Another example: We see that when a patient is ordered to take the prescribed medicine, he takes it while his self does not like it. And when it is forbidden from taking the food which causes him harm, he gives it up while his self desires it. He does all of this seeking a cure and to be safe. It is rather impossible that he refrains from taking the medicine or eating the food which is harmful to him using Al-Qadar as a pretext! Why does man, therefore, abandon the command of Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) or does what Allah (ﷻ) and His Messengers (ﷺ) forbid and then takes Al-Qadar as evidence?

²⁴ Soorah Al-Baqarah 2:268

²⁵ Which means that he must not turn away from what benefits him and blame it on Al-Qadar. [Translator]

Seventh: If the person who takes the Al-Qadar as a pretext (to justify) what he has abandoned from Al-Qaajibaat²⁶ or what he has committed from sin, is attacked by someone who takes away his property or violates his honour and then tells him: “Do not blame me! My attack upon you was due to Allah’s Qadar [i.e. something which Allah (ﷻ) had preordained]”, he would not accept his argument! How come then that he does not accept Al-Qadar as a pretext to justify someone’s else attack on him while he takes it as an argument for his aggression against Allah’s right?

It is said that Ameer Al-Mu’mineen²⁷ ‘Umar bin Al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه) ordered to cut the hand of a thief on who, the (Sharee’ah) ruling was rightly applicable. The thief said:

مهلاً يا أمير المؤمنين ، فإنما سرقت بقدر الله

“Wait O! Leader of the believers! I committed the theft by the Qadar of Allah (i.e. he is blaming it on Al-Qadar).”

‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) replied:

ونحن إنما نقطع بقدر الله

“And we assuredly cut (the hand) by no more than the Qadar of Allah.”

The Belief in Al-Qadar has Great Benefits, Amongst Them:

First: Depending upon Allah (ﷻ) when using the means (by which a thing is brought about) so as not to depend upon the means itself, on the grounds that everything is preordained by Allah (ﷻ) in exact measures.

Second: Saving the person from having a high opinion of himself upon the achievement of his objective, because its attainment is a Favour from Allah (ﷻ) in view of what He had preordained from the means which lead to what is good and successful. His conceitedness makes him forget being grateful to Allah (ﷻ) for this Favour of His.

Third: Securing a state of peace and tranquillity regarding what befalls the person of what had been preordained by Allah (ﷻ). He worries not over failing to attain what is beloved nor over the occurrence of what is disliked, because all of this is in accordance with Al-Qadar of Allah (ﷻ) - to whom belongs the heavens and the earth - and it is inevitable to take place. Allah (ﷻ) says regarding this matter:

²⁶ Al-Waajibaat: The obligatory matters of the Deen. [Translator]

²⁷ Ameer Al-Mu’mineen: The Leader of the believers. [Translator]

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ
 ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ لَّكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا
 يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

“No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (Al-Lauhul Mahfoudh), before We bring it into existence, verily that is easy for Allah. In order that you may not be sad over matters that you fail to get, nor rejoice because of that which has been given to you. And Allah likes not prideful boasters.”²⁸

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

عجبا لأمر المؤمن إن أمره كله خير، وليس ذاك لأحد إلا للمؤمن إن أصابته سراء شكر فكان خيرا
 له، وإن أصابته ضراء صبر فكان خيرا له

“How amazing is the matter of the believers! There is good in every affair of his, and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of the believer: If any Sarraa’²⁹ befalls him, he gives thanks (to Allah), thus there is good for him in it. And if a Darraa’³⁰ befalls him, and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it.”³¹

Two Sects Went Astray Regarding Al-Qadar:

One of them is Al-Jabriyyah³² who assert that man is compelled to do whatever he does and that he has neither the power nor the will to act.

The other one is Al-Qadariyyah³³ who say that whatever man does it is entirely of his own ability and free will, and that Allah’s mashee’ah (Will) and Qudrah (Ability) has no influence whatsoever on what man does.

²⁸ Soorah Al-Hadid 57:22-23

²⁹ Sarraa’: Prosperity, being in a well-to-do state, life of ease, success in the form of obedience to Allah (ﷻ) in matters of Deen, etc. [Translator]

³⁰ Darraa’: Poverty, illness, hardship, trouble, trial, etc. [Translator]

³¹ Reported by Muslim. See Saheeh Muslim, Volume 4, Hadeeth Number. 7138.

³² Al-Jabriyyah (from Arabic Jabr, ‘Compulsion’) who maintained determinism against free will. These are the followers of Jahm bin Safwan (d.128 H/745). Their doctrine is that salvation was predetermined and that man, in effect, could not work either for, not against his salvation. According to this claim man is just like a feather suspended in the air. [Translator]

The Response to the First Sect (Al-Jabriyyah) According to Ash-Shar'a and Reality:

As to the Ash-Shar'a, it is certain that Allah (ﷻ) has affirmed an ability and a free will to the 'abd and has attributed the deeds to him as well. He (ﷻ) said:

مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ

“Among you are some who desire this world and some that desire the Hereafter.”³⁴

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ۚ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا
أَحَاطَ بِهِنَّ سُرَادِقُهَا

“And say: ‘The truth is from your Rabb (Allah).’ Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve. Verily, We have prepared for the Thaalimeen (polytheists and wrong-doers, etc.) a Fire whose walls will be surrounding them.”³⁵

He (ﷻ) also said:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۚ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

“Whosoever does righteous good deed it is for (the benefit of) his ownself, and whosoever does evil, it is against himself, and your Rabb is not at all unjust to (His) slaves.”³⁶

³³ Al-Qadariyyah, Predestinarianism, the opposite extreme to Al-Jabriyyah. They claimed that man creates his own actions by his ability and his will “making” creators other than Allah (ﷻ)! That is why the Prophet (ﷺ) called them the Majoos of this Ummah, because the Majoos claim that Satan “creates” evil and harmful things, making of Satan a “creator” besides Allah (ﷻ). Far is Allah (ﷻ) above what these sects utter.

Abu Dawood related on the authority of Abdullaah bin ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Al-Qadariyyah are the Majoos of this Ummah, if they become ill do not visit them, and when they die do not witness them (their funerals).”

Shaykh Al-Albaanee (رحمته الله) said that the hadeeth is hasan (authentic) by way of its combined narrations. See At-Tahawiiyyah, page 273 and As-Sunnah by Abee ‘Aasim Volume 1 page 149. [Translator]

³⁴ Soorah Aal-'Imran 3:152

³⁵ Soorah Al-Kahf 18:29

³⁶ Soorah Fussilat 41:46

As regard to reality, it is known that each man is aware of the difference between his voluntary deeds like eating, drinking, selling and buying and that which befalls him against his own choice, like tremors associated with fever and like falling from the roof. In the first case he is acting by his own free will and without compulsion, while in the second situation neither he has a choice nor does he want what has befallen him.

The Response to the Second Sect (Al-Qadariyyah) According to Ash-Shar'a and Rational:

As to Ash-Shar'a, it is certain that Allah (ﷻ) is the Creator of everything and all things exist by His Will. Allah (ﷻ) has shown in His Book that the actions of creation occur by His Will. He (ﷻ) said:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَفْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِنْ اخْتَلَفُوا
فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَفْتَتَلُوا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٢٥٣﴾

“If Allah had willed, succeeding generations would not have fought against each other, after clear Aayaat had come to them, but they differed - some of them believed and others disbelieved. If Allah had willed, they would have not fought against one another, but Allah does what He likes.”³⁷

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدًى وَلَكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ
وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

“And if We had willed, surely! We would have given every person his guidance, but the Word from Me took effect (about evil doers), that I will fill Hell with jinn and mankind together.”³⁸

As to rational, it is evident that the entire universe belongs to Allah (ﷻ), and because man is part of this universe, consequently he belongs to Allah (ﷻ). It is not the right of the possessed to dispose freely the property of the Possessor except by the latter's leave and will.

³⁷ Soorah Al-Baqarah 2:253

³⁸ Soorah As-Sajdah 32:13